

SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program

There are two types of federal fellowships: **SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship** and **SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship**. Both fellowships provide opportunities for researchers to come to Washington, D.C. to learn about policy development, implementation and evaluation and to use developmental science outside of the academic setting to inform public policy.

About the Federal Fellowship Program

The SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship Program is a full-time immersion experience in Washington, D.C. and runs from September 1st through August 31st. Fellows are placed in either a federal agency or congressional office placement and serve as resident scholars in their placements. The SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship may be renewed for a second year at the agency's discretion and, under rare circumstances, the SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship may be extended four months to the end of the legislative session.

The Federal Fellowship Program aims to:

1. Provide fellows with firsthand experience in federal policymaking, program implementation, and evaluation.
2. Provide federal executive branch agencies and Congress greater access to research expertise on a diverse range of child development topics to enhance evidence-based policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
3. Build a network of experts that bridge developmental science, federal policymaking, and practice.



SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship

The SRCD Congressional Policy Fellowship Program provides scientists opportunities to utilize their expertise as they directly engage in the legislative policymaking process. Placements can involve working for a congressional committee or in the office of a member of Congress.

Examples of Congressional Fellow Responsibilities

Although the responsibilities of each fellow vary by office, past fellows have worked on drafting legislation, bringing research to bear on re-authorization of programs or appropriations, and advising members of Congress through research that bears on federal programs and services affecting children, youth and families. Fellows may also prepare or assist in congressional hearings and briefings or preparing briefs and speeches.

Congressional Fellowship Placement Process

Following the two-week science policy orientation program at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in September, fellows will interview with congressional offices to determine

a placement. AAAS organizes the placement process. Placements for SRCD Congressional Policy Fellows are not determined until after the orientation process in September of the fellowship year. Ethics rules prohibit contact between fellows and offices until that time.



SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship

The SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship provides scientists opportunities to directly engage in the executive policymaking process including the development, implementation, and evaluation of child and family policies and programs. You may view where prior fellows' placement offices by viewing Spotlight columns by fellows [here](#). Please note that some placement opportunities vary from year to year and confirmed placement opportunities will be communicated during the selection process.

Examples of Executive Branch Fellow Responsibilities

SRCD Executive Branch Fellows are involved with bridging research and policy through a variety of responsibilities. Past fellows have been provided with training opportunities to work on programmatic and research funding; the federal regulatory process; program evaluation for federal programs; and other

implementation aspects of federal policymaking. For example, some fellows' placements have provided them with opportunities to contribute to study design for congressionally mandated and federally-funded studies, to write RFA's and Program Announcements for federal grant programs, to contribute to grant review for extramural grant applications, to foster cross-agency collaborations, and to develop new research agendas to inform programs and policies that serve diverse populations.

Executive Branch Fellowship Placement Process

When applicants to the SRCD Executive Branch Policy Fellowship visit Washington, D.C. for their interviews in the spring, they will also attend a Federal Agency Informational Session with representatives of placement agencies. Selected candidates then attend finalist interviews with the federal agencies. The federal agencies will extend fellowship offers to selected candidates after finalist interviews. SRCD will extend formal offers which include fellowship agreement forms to the selected candidates in May.

Benefits of Being a Federal Policy Fellow

Be immersed in policy work in Washington, D.C.

- The fellowship will help developmental scientists at all career stages to:
 - Understand the linkages between research and policy through an immersion experience
 - Engage in the policymaking process
 - Learn how developmental science can be utilized to improve policy development, implementation, and evaluation
 - Use research to inform federally-funded policies that serve diverse populations
 - Learn how to communicate effectively with policymakers and other stakeholders
 - Formulate more informed and useful questions for policy-related research
 - Further expand your career opportunities and network
 - Strengthen your skill sets with professional development opportunities
- Fellows are members of the [Science and Technology Fellowship Program](#) of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), which includes fellows from a variety of scientific disciplines.
- The SRCD policy team works to facilitate the fellows' experience and are available as a resource throughout the year.
- Training periods:
 - Two-week science policy orientation hosted by AAAS during the first two weeks of the fellowship

year in September.

- Two and a half day training focused on child and family policy in October, hosted at the SRCD office in Washington, D.C.
- Monthly topical seminars for fellows with topics focusing on child and family policy, evidence-based policymaking, and career development hosted at the SRCD office.
- Career development programming (e.g., writing a resume, communicating science) and social events through the fellowship year, hosted by AAAS.
- Two-day Capstone Meeting at the end of the fellowship year in August, hosted at the SRCD office.
- Individualized professional development planning to support the fellow's unique learning goals over the course of the fellowship program.
- Development of a professional portfolio that showcases the fellow's experiences and contributions to the placement throughout the fellowship year.

Receive a stipend, health insurance allocation, and relocation allowance.

- Stipends for fellows follow the federal government GS level 12 pay scale, taking into consideration post-Ph.D. experience.
- An allocation for purchase of health insurance is provided with the amount depending upon number of family members covered.
- SRCD provides fellows with an allowance of up to \$1,300 for moving expenses if they moved 50 or more miles.

Note: Fellows hired as temporary employees of their placement agency (or the placement agency's staffing service provider) will receive their salary and benefits directly from the agency and are not eligible for a relocation allowance. However, many expenses for employment-related relocation are tax deductible for moves more than 50 miles from your previous work location ([see the IRS guidelines](#)).

Receive a professional development fund.

- Fellows receive an allowance of up to \$2,800 to use towards professional development opportunities during their fellowship year.

Note: Fellows who are temporary federal employees do not receive a separate allowance for professional development. This will be at the discretion of the host office.

Join an extensive network of fellowship alumni.

- The SRCD Federal Policy Fellowship began in 1978 with congressional placements. In 1991, the

fellowship program added placements in federal executive branch agencies. The SRCD State Policy Fellowship began recently in 2017.

- To date, there is a network of over 200 fellowship alumni.

Learn about the difference between the Federal Congressional and Executive Branch Fellowships, the types of work past fellows have done, the career trajectories of fellowship alumni, and more in this informational webinar.



[view the full transcript here](#)

My experience as a fellow has been incredibly rewarding. It has allowed me to utilize my expertise...to inform and shape conversations that will directly impact the lives of children and families...I am incredibly grateful for the experience and look forward to utilizing the knowledge that I have gained to promote communication between the policy and research communities to better shape our nation's services for children and families.

— Former SRCD Congressional Fellow

[Read brief articles written by SRCD Federal Policy Fellows about their diverse experiences](#)

Who Should Apply?

Both the SRCD Executive Branch and Congressional Policy Fellowships are designed for scholars across all

career levels (early, mid-career, and advanced-career) from a variety of backgrounds and scientific disciplines and who have an interest in policy. Applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Earn a doctoral-level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.) relevant to child development prior to the start of the fellowship.
- Applicants must be U.S. citizens.
- Applicants must be members of SRCD.

SRCD embraces a commitment to, and support for, diversity in the child development field. This includes training and engaging a workforce that is representative of diversity in all its forms. We encourage fellowship applications from scholars of color, scholars from underrepresented cultural and ethnic backgrounds, scholars from low-income backgrounds, first-generation college graduates, scholars with disabilities, and scholars from the LGBTQIA+ community.

[Read more information on the application process, including required materials, timeline, and evaluation criteria.](#)

Previous fellows found it helpful to speak with former fellows about the application process and/or their fellowship experiences. We recommend you reach out to former fellows that you may know in your own extended network. If you'd like to reach out to a former fellow outside your network, you can also view this [list of previous SRCD Policy Fellows](#). Alternatively, you can contact policyfellowships@srcd.org to set up a connection with a former fellow.

[How to Apply](#)

What types of Careers do Fellows pursue after Completing the Federal Fellowship Program?

SRCD Federal Policy Fellows take different career paths following their fellowship experience.

- **Begin or return to careers in academia.** Approximately a third of fellows follow this path with strengthened credentials in policy-relevant research and an ability to teach students about the complex issues involved in bridging science and policy.
- **Continue to work in public policy and/or research settings.** Some fellows remain in Washington D.C. and work in federal agencies. For example, fellows have gone on to work at federal agencies such

as the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

- **Transition to careers with research organizations.** Other fellows pursue careers with organizations that bridge research and policy. For examples, fellows have gone on to work at research organizations such as American Institutes for Research, Child Trends, Learning Policy Institute, and SRI International.

Questions?

Contact us via email at policyfellowships@srcd.org or call 202-800-0666.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)